Targeting

For the Maneuver Task Force

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With the coming Force XXI technological advances, maneuver commanders and staffs may need to "upgrade" the way they decide on the employment of their units and weapon systems. The targeting process holds some interesting prospects. Every soldier on today's battlefield should be considered a "collector." Soldiers under Force XXI will have an even greater ability to detect enemy targets and provide terminal guidance for attack mechanisms, which is the essence of targeting. To make the most of these abilities, commanders and staffs will have to clearly understand how to link targeting to the decision-making process.

Field Manual (FM) 6-20-10, *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Targeting Process*, does a good job of describing the targeting process but does not clearly explain how a maneuver commander should apply it. I offer here an approach to the targeting process that may help maneuver units incorporate targeting into the existing decision-making process.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Although FM 6-20-10 was written by the Field Artillery School, it has a much broader application than many realize. The targeting process is a way of organizing your thoughts to determine which enemy targets to attack (decide), how to find those targets (detect), and how to attack them (deliver). The manual states that targeting is based on the friendly scheme of maneuver or tactical plan, but the targeting process also helps develop and analyze a friendly course of action (COA).

A starting point for maneuver com-

manders and staffs is to think of the enemy as a system of targets. As described here, a target is not just a field artillery target. It is any enemy unit, weapon, or facility; each enemy platoon, mortar section, supply point, and air defense system can be considered a separate target.

The second step is to prioritize these targets. This requires an analysis of the importance of each target as it relates to the successful accomplishment of the friendly mission. Identifying the most important target is often the decisive point of the operation.

The third step is to think of your task force as a system of detectors and attack mechanisms. The detectors' job is to find

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enemy targets early enough for the attack mechanisms to defeat these targets at the designated place and time.

Incorporating the Process

The maneuver commander is responsible for targeting; it is not something the fire support officer (FSO) can do alone. Once the commander decides on the effects he wants to achieve against particular targets, the staff "weaponeers" must determine the best means of achieving those effects. (The "weaponeers" are the staff officers who plan or coordinate le-

thal and nonlethal attack assets: S-3 for maneuver, FSO for indirect fires, air liaison officer for close air support, S-2 for electronic warfare, PSYOPs team chief for PSYOPS, and so on.) This may mean attacking with field artillery, close air support, maneuver forces, mines, electronic warfare, psychological operations, or other capabilities available to the task force. The FSO cannot possibly plan for and coordinate all assets required to decide, detect, and deliver on all required enemy targets. To be effective, targeting needs command emphasis and staff integration.

The commander and staff can easily incorporate targeting into the estimate process. Although FM 6-20-10 talks about the decide-detect-deliver process, it is describing the sequence of execution. During planning, however, the commander or staff must first *decide* which types of targets to attack, then determine how they will *deliver* the attack on these targets, and finally determine how to *detect* the targets before the attack. Hence, it is logical to follow a decide-deliver-detect process during planning (Figure 1). The following provides some details on how to integrate the targeting process.

Mission Analysis. To help see the enemy as a system of targets, the S-2 develops a list of high-value targets (HVTs) during mission analysis. HVTs are the assets the enemy commander must have for the successful completion of his mission. The list must be detailed enough that the commander, S-3, FSO, and others can understand the capabilities of these targets. Figure 2 shows an example of an HVT list. The S-2 should brief the list during the mission analysis briefing,

setting the stage for the *decide* function of targeting.

COA Development. During COA development, the commander and staff prioritize targets and make initial decisions on how to attack them. Although FM 6-20-10 implies that high-payoff targets (HPTs) are determined during wargaming, the commander and staff should *decide* on tentative HPTs during

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COA development. HPTs are those HVTs that must be acquired and successfully attacked if the friendly commander's missions are to succeed. A course of action is normally sound if it focuses attacks on enemy targets whose defeat will lead to the success of the friendly mission. Therefore, it makes sense to select initial HPTs during COA development.

Targets must be selected on the basis of the mission, the commander's intent, and the commander's planning guidance, as articulated at the conclusion of the mission analysis brief. The selection of the best assets to use in attacking a particular enemy target is based on a combat power analysis and damage requirements. This will help ensure the most efficient use of assets.

A logical first step is to determine how to *deliver* the attack on the highest priority target or decisive point. For example, during an attack of an enemy strongpoint, the most critical target to ensure the success of the unit mission may be the enemy platoon covering the selected breach point. This becomes the tentative scheme of maneuver for the main effort.

The next step is to analyze other enemy forces (HVTs) to determine their ability to interfere with or prevent the success of the main effort. These HVTs now become HPTs, or targets that friendly assets must defeat to accomplish the mis-

sion. Friendly assets allocated against these targets are supporting efforts. Enemy HVTs that cannot influence the main effort do not become HPTs, and the staff should not allocate friendly assets against them.

This approach crafts a scheme of maneuver that begins with the main effort and establishes clear links to supporting efforts. It sets the conditions for a successful attack at the decisive point.

The goal during COA development is to *decide*, in order of priority, which enemy targets must be attacked to ensure friendly unit success, the degree of damage required for each target, and how to *deliver* the attack on these targets. Figure 3 is a sample HPT list. This list is a tool that the staff can use to help prioritize HPTs and the degree of damage required for each.

COA Analysis. During COA analysis (wargaming), the commander and staff fine-tune the priority of targets and attack mechanisms. They also determine which detection systems will find specific targets. Units normally use the action, reaction, counteraction methodology to gain a clear and common vision of how the battle might unfold. As they mentally fight each COA, the staff members refine HPTs and attack assets to ensure success; that is, refine the *decide* and *deliver* functions.

With a good understanding of enemy doctrine, the terrain, and the capabilities of available collection assets, the S-2 can anticipate where attacks will achieve maximum effects on particular HPTs. Based on the S-2's recommendation and

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his understanding of friendly weapon systems, the S-3 determines the location for attacks on HPTs, and these locations become targeted areas of interest (TAIs). The S-2 and S-3 must be realistic in the placement of the TAIs. They must be sure
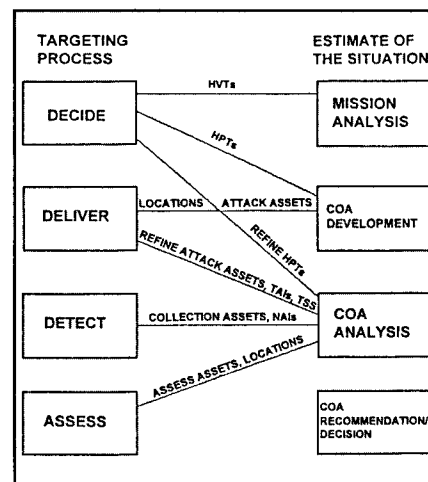

Figure 1

HIGH VALUE TARGET LIST

TARGET	CAPABILITIES	LIMITATIONS
CLF TEAM	HIGHLY MOBILE HARD TO DETECT EXPERT MARKSMAN OUT TO 500m CARRY SMALL ARMS KNOW TERRAIN MAY HAVE LINKS TO VILLAGES	NEED FREQUENT RESUPPLY NONSECURE COMMO LIMITED NIGHT VISION LITTLE ACCESS TO VEHICLES
SA-14 TEAM		
82mm MORTAR TEAM		
BSP		

Figure 2

HIGH PAYOFF TARGET LIST

PRIORITY	TARGET DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	DAMAGE REQUIRED
1	BATTALION SUPPLY POINT	VE 123456	DESTROY/CAPTURE OR ISOLATE FROM CLF
2	82mm MORTAR TEAM	VE 234567	DESTROY/SUPPRESS
3	SA-14 TEAM	VE 345678	DESTROY/SUPPRESS

Figure 3

that the unit has the capability to detect and attack at the required distances.

This is also a good time for the S-2 to reiterate the description and capabilities of the HPTs. This allows the weaponeers to make better decisions on the assets required to defeat discrete HPTs (BRDMs, traveling in a certain formation, with a certain type of air defense artillery coverage).

It now becomes important for the S-2 to conduct specific collection planning. He must determine locations where the task force's collection assets can *detect* the HPTs early enough to allow specific attack assets to defeat the HPTs at designated TAIs. The targeted areas for col-

ATTACK GUIDANCE MATRIX

TARGET	LOCATION	DETECT	DELIVER	ASSESS	TSS REMARKS
BSP	VE123456	SCOUT PLT ENGR SQUAD W/MINE-SWEEPERS	CO A	CO A	CO A RESPONDS W/1 PLT, W/1 HR OF SCTS FINDING CACHES, CO A DESTROYS IN PLACE OR SPT PLT BACKHAULS TO BSA
82mm MORTAR TEAM	VE234567	AN/TPQ-36	COUNTER-FIRE W/ 105mm	CO B	CUE IS LESS THAN 2 MIN OLD, FSO CLEARS FIRES, CO B MOVES TO SEAL AND SEARCH AREA.
CRP	RT RED	NAI 1 SCOUTS	TAI 1 CO A	CO A	AT NAI 1 SCOUTS CONFIRM CRP IS MOVING NORTH ON RT RED
CARNIS	VE345678	NAI 2 TM VILLAGE	PSYOPS TM	CI/ PSYOPS	VILLAGE IS NOT OPENLY HOSTILE. PERSUADE LOCALS THAT U.S. PRESENCE WILL PROVIDE LONG-TERM BENEFITS

Figure 4

DECIDE	DETECT	DELIVER	
	FIND	FIX	FINISH
BSP (VE123456)	SCOUT PLT W/ ENGINEER SQUAD (NAI 1)	CO A (ISOLATE)	ENGINEER PLT W/100 BLOCKS C4

Figure 5

lection assets are named areas of interest (NAIs). Once the S-2 determines when specific HPTs will enter the NAIs, he can identify the signatures that he expects to see at the NAIs. This provides the S-2 with the information he needs to plan the best assets to detect the HPTs at these NAIs.

These tasks demand that the weaponeers have a good grasp of time-distances factors (the time required to bring the effects of the attack assets to bear on the TAI). The S-2 must have a thorough understanding of the capabilities of the selected collection assets. Clearly, this process leads to the formation of a well-developed reconnaissance and surveillance plan and decision support template.

There are two other requirements for the staff during wargaming. The first is to determine target selection standards (TSSs). TSSs are the time and accuracy requirements necessary to launch an attack on an HPT. For example, in order to initiate an indirect fire attack on dismounted infantry, the standard might be direct observation on the enemy within the past two minutes. The standards described here have a slightly different twist from that described in FM 6-20-10. What is important, however, is that the TSSs provide enough guidance for everyone to clearly understand the standards for launching an attack on various targets.

The second requirement is to determine whether there is a need to assess the results of the attack on an enemy target. If there is an assessment requirement, the staff must determine what assets will conduct the assessment and when it will occur.

Figure 4 provides an example of an attack guidance matrix, which helps the staff record the results of the wargame as

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it applies to targeting. If time permits during wargaming, the staff can also determine contingency means of attacking HPTs. These contingencies might require the use of the reserve or a branch from the original plan. Again, these wargaming tasks tie directly to the formation of a well-developed decision support template.

COA Recommendation. After wargaming, the staff must recommend the best COA to the commander. Keeping the targeting process in mind, an important measure of any COA is how efficiently the friendly unit detected and de-

livered on selected HPTs. This efficiency can be measured in terms of time, terrain, loss of friendly assets, certainty of target destruction, and end state of friendly forces after attacks on HPTs. All of this information will come from a thorough wargaming session.

Finally, there is some difference of opinion as to whether targeting has any useful application during low-intensity conflict (LIC). FM 7-20, *The Infantry Battalion,* describes the *find-fix-finish* concept for search and attack operations during LIC operations. As shown in Figure 5, there is a clear connection between the *decide-detect-deliver* process of targeting and the *find-fix-finish* process of search and attack operations.

A commander first *decides* which specific targets to attack (using the methodology described above). *Detecting* these targets is the same as *finding* the targets. *Delivering* an attack on LIC targets normally requires assets to *fix* and *finish* the targets.

Targeting that is integrated into the estimate process can help the staff with a logical planning sequence to develop and analyze courses of action. The targeting process helps the commander and his staff organize their thoughts as they wrestle with the best way to beat a complex enemy. Thinking in terms of "detectors" and "attack mechanisms" may also help maneuver commanders and staffs determine how to use the advanced technology that will be available under Force XXI.

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